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The remainder of the party arrived as safely, but somewhat more regularly, in the evening of their eventful day, and all dissatisfied except Mr O'Gorman, and

NAISI.

STREET TACTICS.

You, most respectable reader, who owe no man any thing that you are not able and willing to pay, may know nothing of the tactics alluded to in the title of this paper. But there is, you may depend upon it, a pretty numerous class of the community to whom these tactics are quite familiar, and who practise them to a greater or lesser extent every day of their lives.

Street tactics, let us define the term, is the art or science of avoiding all persons on the streets, and all places in the streets—shops, for instance—whom and which, for particular reasons of your own, you are desirous of eschewing.

The art is thus one of deep concernment to the whole of that numerous and respectable body known by the generic name of "gentlemen in difficulties." This term, however, is one of very extensive signification, and includes various descriptions of gentlemen as well as difficulties; but on the present occasion we mean to confine ourselves to one particular class—the gentlemen whose difficulties arise from their having more creditors than crowns—the gentlemen who have contrived to surround themselves with a large constituency of the former, and who cannot by any means contrive to get hold of an adequate supply of the latter—the gentlemen who are sufficiently respectable to get into debt, but not sufficiently wealthy to get out of it.

The reader can have no idea how difficult a matter it is for a gentleman of this description to work his way through the streets, so as to avoid all unpleasant encounters; how serious a matter it is for him to move from one point of the city to another. To him the streets are, in fact, as difficult and dangerous to traverse as if they were strewn with heated ploughshares, or lined with concealed pitfalls. He cannot move a hundred yards, unless he moves warily, without encountering somebody to whom he owes something, or passing some shop where his name is not in the most savoury odour.

It is, then, the manœuvring necessary to avoid these disagreeables that constitutes street tactics, and confers on the gentleman who practises them the character of what we would call a street tactician.

This person, as already hinted, when he moves at all, must move cautiously, and must consider well, before he starts, which is his safest course; which the course in which he is least likely to encounter an enemy in the shape of a creditor, and which will subject him to running the gauntlet of the fewest number of obnoxious shops. The amount of manœuvring required to accomplish this is amazing, and the ingenuity exhibited in it frequently very remarkable.

When on the move, the street tactician is obliged to be constantly on the alert, to have all his eyes about him, lest an enemy should come upon him unawares. This incessant vigilance keeps him always wide awake, always on the look-out, and makes him as sharp as a needle. Even while speaking to you, his keen and restless eye is roving up and down the street to see that no danger is approaching.

Like the training of the Indian, this incessant vigilance improves his physical faculties wonderfully, especially his vision, which it renders singularly acute. He can detect a creditor at a distance at which the nearest friend, the most intimate acquaintance of that person, could not recognise him: he can see him approaching in a crowded street, where no other eye but his own could possibly single him out.

Gifted with this remarkable power of vision, it is rare that the street tactician is taken by surprise, as it affords him time to plan and effect his escape, at both of which he is amazingly prompt and dexterous.

As the great object with the street tactician in moving from one point of the city to another is not the shortest but the safest course, he is necessarily subjected to a vast deal of traverse sailing, and thereby to enormous increases of distance, being frequently obliged to make the circuit of half the town to get at the next street. His way is thus most particularly devious, and to one who should watch his motions without knowing the principles on which he moves, would ap-

pear altogether incomprehensible. Here he crosses a street with a sudden dart, there he turns a corner with a slow and stealthy step; now he walks deliberately, now as if it were for a wager. Again he walks slowly; then comes a sudden brush: it is to clear some dangerous spot in which an enemy is lurking in ambush—the shop door of a creditor. Now he cuts down an alley; now hesitates before he emerges at the opposite end; now darts out of it as if he had been fired from it, like a shell from a mortar. And thus, and thus, and thus he finally completes his circuitous and perilous journey. It is fatiguing and laborious work, but it must be done if he would avoid being worried to death.

Besides that ever watchfulness, that sleepless vigilance that distinguishes the street tactician, there is about him a degree of presence of mind not less worthy of special notice. It is by this ready fortitude and coolness of temper that he is enabled, even when in what may be called the immediate presence of an enemy, to devise and execute with promptness and decision the most ingenious expedients for avoiding personal contact—that enables him, when within twenty yards of the foe (when so near that a less experienced hand, one of less steady nerve, would inevitably fall into the clutches of his dun, and who would at once be given up for lost by any on-looker) to effect a retreat, and thus avoid the crave personal—in so cool and masterly a way, that the enemy himself shall not know that he has been *shirked*, but shall be deceived into a belief that he has not been seen, and that the pretext, or pretexts, under cover of which the street tactician has evaded him, has or have been true and natural. This is a difficult point to manage; but old hands can do it admirably, and, when well done, is a very beautiful manœuvre.

The skilful street tactician never exhibits any flurry or agitation, however imminent his danger may be: it is only green-horns that do this. Neither does he hurry or run away from an enemy when he sees him. This would at once betray malice prepense, and excite the utmost wrath of the latter, who, the moment he got home, would put his claim into the hands of his lawyer; a proceeding which he must by no means be provoked into adopting.

The skilful street tactician takes care of this, then, and studies to effect his retreats in such a way as to excite no suspicion of design. He does, indeed, take some very sudden and abrupt turns down streets and up lanes when he sees an enemy approaching; but he does it with so unconscious a look, and with such a *bona fide* air, that neither you nor his creditor would for a moment suspect any thing else than that he was just going that way at any rate. This operation requires great command both of muscle and manner, and can be successfully performed only by a very superior practitioner.

To the street tactician, carts, carriages, and other large moving objects, are exceedingly useful auxiliaries as covers from the enemy, and the dexterity and tact with which he avails himself of their aid in effecting a "go-by," is amazing. By keeping the cart, carriage, or other body in a direct line between him and the foe, he effects many wonderful, many hair-breadth escapes. The chaise or cart is in this way, and for this purpose, a very good thing, but the waggon of hay, slow in its motion, and huge in its bulk, makes the best of all protecting covers.

With a waggon of hay moving along with him, and a very little manœuvring on his own part, the expert tactician could traverse the whole city without the risk of a single encounter. But his having such an accompaniment for any length of time, is of course out of the question. He must just be content to avail himself of it when chance throws it in his way, and be thankful for its protection throughout the length of a street.

We have heard experienced street tacticians, men on whose skill and judgment we would be disposed to place every reliance, say, that it is a very absurd practice to run across a street to avoid a shop, and to pass along on the opposite side. Such a proceeding, they say—and there is reason and common sense, as well as scientific knowledge, in the remark—only exposes you more to the enemy, by passing you through a larger space of his field of vision—by giving him, in short, a longer, a fuller, and a fairer view of you. Far better, they say, to walk close by his window at a smart pace, when the chances are greatly in favour of your passing unobserved.

This way of giving a shop the "go-by" requires, indeed, more courage, more resolution than the other, being, certainly, rather a daring exploit; but we are satisfied, that, like boldness of movement in the battle-field, it is, after all, the least dangerous.